

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
LAB-04 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /079 W
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R 271055Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5225
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 298
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 1080

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, FR, CZ
SUBJECT: CGT AT THE WFTU CONGRESS

REFS A. PARIS 13442 B. PRAGUE 1028(NOTAL)
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1. SUMMARY: TEXTS OF GEORGES SEGUY'S TWO STATEMENTS AT THE PRAGUE
WFTU CONGRESS CORROBORATE REPORT (REF A) THAT A GENUINE CONFRONTATION
BETWEEN CGT AND MOSCOW-ORIENTED WFTU FORCES APPARENTLY DID IN
FACT TAKE PLACE. FRENCH EMBASSY CONFIRMS THAT SEGUY CLASHED
WITH CZECHOSLOVAK LABOR LEADER KAREL HOFFMAN, AND THAT CGT
DELEGATION HAD CONTACTS WITH CHARTER 77 SIGNERS.

WE LEAVE IT TO PARIS TO ASSESS SINCERITY OF SEGUY'S "EUROSYNDICALISM"

END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO TEXTS OBTAINED FROM A FRENCH SOURCE, CGT GENERAL SECRETARY GEORGES SEGUY BEGAN HIS ADDRESS TO THE WFTU CONGRESS APRIL 17 BY DISCUSSING THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE AFTER THE ELECTIONS. CONCLUDING THAT THE "ONLY CONCEIVABLE REALISTIC COURSE" FOR THE CGT IN PRESENT HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES WAS "LA VOIE DEMOCRATIQUE," SEGUY URGED THE WFTU LIKEWISE TO ADAPT ITSELF TO CHANGED CONDITIONS: "IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT WE HAVE REFLECTED UPON THE PLACE AND THE ROLE OF THE WFTU, WHICH HAS LED US TO STATE THAT IT SHOULD SERIOUSLY ADAPT, REFORM AND RENEW ITSELF, SO AS TO BE UP TO DATE WITH THE TIMES, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE CHANGES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT THE HEART OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE MOVEMENT SINCE THE SOMBER PERIOD OF THE COLD WAR." "WE REGRET," SEGUY CONTINUED, " THAT OUR PROPOSALS WERE ONLY PARTIALLY RETAINED IN THE DRAFT OF THE DOCUMENT ON POLICY AND ACTION, WHICH FACT LIMITED THE CONTENT OF COMRADE GENSOUS'S REPORT. HOWEVER, WE WILL APPROVE THIS DOCUMENT AND THE REPORT WITH THE PROPOSALS THEY CONTAIN WITHOUT RENOUNCING THE RIGHT FRANKLY TO SET FORTH OUR OWN POSITIONS ON PROBLEMS A PROPOS OF WHICH THERE EXIST DIFFERENCES AND EVEN DIVERGENCES BETWEEN US. WE THINK, FOR EXAMPLE, OF THE PARALYSING EFFECTS WHICH THE FOREIGN POLICY PREOCCUPATIONS OF TOO MANY TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS, NOTABLY IN THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, HAVE HAD ON THE WFTU."

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3. SEGUY NEXT ARGUED THAT BY SUPPORTING THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS, THE CGT WAS UNDERTAKING TO PRESS FOR THE ENFORCEMENT IN FRANCE OF ITS PROVISIONS, AND THAT OTHER DELEGATIONS, FROM WHATEVER COUNTRIES, SHOULD MAKE THE SAME PLEDGE. "OTHERWISE", HE SAID, " WE SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO SPEAK OF A UNIVERSAL DECLARATION." HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY THE CGT WOULD CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WFTU, BUT WOULD NOT PRESENT PIERRE GENSOUS AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S JOB.

4. WE UNDERSTAND FROM THE FRENCH EMBASSY THAT SHORTLY AFTER SEGUY'S SPEECH SHRIPAD DANGE, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INDIAN AITUC, OBTAINED THE FLOOR AND ROUNDLY DENOUNCED SEGUY'S POSITION, ACCUSING THE CGT OF "NATIONALISM" OUR FRENCH COLLEAGUES QUOTE SEGUY AS TELLING THEM HE RECEIVED "NUMEROUS" PRIVATE EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR HIS POSITION FROM THIRD WORLD DELEGATIONS, WHO, BECAUSE THEY ARE FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT ON MOSCOW, COULD NOT OPENLY BACK HIM. SEGUY ALSO TOLD FRENCH EMBASSY THAT THE SOVIETS, NOT WISHING TO HAVE AN OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH THE CGT, PUT DANGE UP TO REBUKING HIM, WHILE CONFINING THEMSELVES TO EXPRESSIONS OF "REGRET" OVER THE CGT POSITION.

5. FRENCH EMBASSY CONFIRMS THAT RENE DUHAMEL MET WITH
CHARTER 77 SIGNERS, BUT DID NOT OFFER NAMES.

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6. SEGUY ENTERED THE FRAY AGAIN WHEN PRACE, THE CZECHOSLOVAK TRADE
UNION ORGAN, PUBLISHED ONLY SSORT EXCERPTS FROM HIS SPEECH.
ACCORDING TO FRENCH EMBASSY SOURCE, SEGUY WROTE LETTERS TO
PRACE'S EDITOR AND TO KAREL HOFFMAN, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK CENTRAL TRADE UNIONS COUNCIL, COMPLAINING THAT
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CENSORSHIP OF A COMMUNIST'S SPEECH BY A COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER
IN A COMMUNIST COUNTRY CONSTITUTED AN "ODIOUS IGNOMINY."

7. ON APRIL 22, SEGUY MADE A SECOND INTERVENTION, IN RESPONSE TO DANGE'S CHARGE OF NATIONALISM. HE REJECTED THE LABEL "NATIONALIST" AS "PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE" TO THE CGT IN VIEW OF ITS HISTORICAL SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS OF FRENCH COLONIALISM. THEN, IN A WARNING, HE SAID, "IF SUCH ANATHEMAS AGAINST THE CGT CONTINUE TO BE ENCOURAGED BY THOSE IN PREDOMINANT POSITIONS AT THE HEART OF THE WFTU, THE ATMOSPHERE WILL QUICKLY BECOME UNBREATHEABLE FOR US."

8. SEGUY NEXT TACKLED THE ISSUE OF DOUBLE STANDARDS:
"A PROPOS THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS, SOME COMRADES HAVE INSISTED ON THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FUNCTIONS UNDER CONDITIONS OF CAPITALISM OR OF SOCIALISM. WE ARE PERFECTLY AWARE OF THIS DIFFERENCE; BUT THE NATURE OF THE REGIME SHOULD NOT MODIFY THE PRIMARY MISSION OF THE TRADE UNION, WHICH IS TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS. EXPERIENCE DEMONSTRATES THAT TRADE UNION AUTONOMY IS ONE OF THE MAJOR CONDITIONS FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS MISSION. ON THIS THERE HAS BEEN DISCUSSION HERE OF THE RIGHT TO STRIKE. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THE RIGHT TO STRIKE CANNOT BE SUSPENDED, BE IT LEGAL OR NOT...THE SUPERIORITY OF SOCIALISM OVER CAPITALISM SHOULD NOT RESIDE IN SUSPENSION OF THE RIGHT TO STRIKE, BUT IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE CAUSES WHICH ENGENDER CONFLICTS WHICH LEAD TO WORK-STOPPAGES." LATER IN THIS SECOND INTERVENTION, SEGUY SAID, "NO ONE CAN CLAIM TO BE THE UNIVERSAL DEPOSITORY OF THE TRUTH AND OF REVOLUTIONARY PURITY," AND REMARKED, "INTOLERANCE IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH MASS TRADE UNIONISM." ON THE WFTU'S PENCHANT FOR INVOLVING ITSELF IN FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS, SEGUY SAID, "WE AGREE WITH THE WFTU'S ATTACHING MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, FOR
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DISARMAMENT AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, BUT NOT TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS TRANSFORMED INTO A WORLD TRADE UNION MOVEMENT FOR PEACE." HE CLOSED BY HOPING THAT THE NINTH WFTU CONGRESS WOULD BE THE POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR AN "OPEN AND FRATERNAL DEBATE" AND THAT THE CGT WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO REENFORCE ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE WFTU.

9. FRENCH EMBASSY TELLS US THEY LEARNED FROM A VISA APPLICANT THAT SOME EIGHTY DELEGATES TO THE PRAGUE WFTU CONGRESS WITHDREW TO MOSCOW FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS AFTER THE MEETING'S OFFICIAL END. HALF OF THE EIGHTY WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BY THE SOVIETS AFTER THE CONGRESS BEGAN. WE

CANNOT CONFIRM.

10. FULL TEXTS(IN FRENCH) BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT (EUR),
PARIS AND BRUSSELS. COMMENT: WE LEAVE ASSESSMENT OF SEGUY'S
ANTICS TO EMBASSY PARIS, BUT NOTE FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S
VIEW THAT CGT DESIRE TO REGAIN GROUND LOST IN ELECTIONS AND TO
BREAK INTO ETUC STRONGLY INFLUENCED SEGUY'S APPROACH. BERT
RAMELSON OF CPGB AGREES SEGUY HAS ETUC AMBITIONS,
BUT STILL DOUBTS CGT WILL LEAVE WFTU.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 27 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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